

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

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CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT
FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND TENTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Tuesday, 4 July 1967, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. E.L.M. BURNS

(Canada)

THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

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PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. A.F. AZEREDO da SILVEIRA
Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA
Mr. S. de QUEIROZ DUARTE

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. CHRISTOV
Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV
Mr. T. DAMIANOV
Mr. D. KOSTOV

Burma:

U KYAW MIN

Canada:

Mr. E.L.M. BURNS
Mr. C.J. MARSHALL
Mr. J.R. MORDEN

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. P. WINKLER
Mr. V. VAJNAR

Ethiopia:

Mr. A. ZELLEKE
Mr. B. ASSFAW

India:

Mr. V.C. TRIVEDI
Mr. N. KRISHNAN
Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. G.P. TOZZOLI
Mr. E. FRANCO
Mr. F. SORO

Mexico:

Mr. J. CASTAÑEDA
Miss E. AGUIRRE

Nigeria:

Alhaji SULE KOLO
Mr. B.O. TONWE

Poland:

Mr. J. GOLDBLAT
Mr. E. STANIEWSKI

Romania:

Mr. O. IONESCO
Mr. C. GEORGESCO
Mr. A. COROIANU
Mr. M. BUHOARA

Sweden:

Mrs. A. MYRDAL
Mr. A. EDELSTAM
Mr. R. BOMAN
Mr. U. ERICSSON

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
Mr. V.P. SUSLOV
Mr. I.M. PALENYKH

United Arab Republic:

Mr. A. OSMAN
Mr. O. SIRRY
Mr. A.A. SALAM
Mr. M. SHAKER

United Kingdom:

Sir Harold BEELEY
Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE
Mr. M.R. MORLAND

United States of America:

Mr. W.C. FOSTER
Mr. G. BUNN
Mr. C.G. BREAN
Mr. C. GLEYSTEN

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

Deputy Special Representative
of the Secretary-General:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (Canada): I declare open the three hundred and tenth plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.
2. Mr. AZEREDO DA SILVEIRA (Brazil): I have asked for the floor today to make some remarks about the issues that were dealt with by the Secretary General of the Brazilian Ministry for Foreign Relations, Ambassador Sergio Corrêa da Costa, in his statement to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament on 18 May (ENDC/PV.297). We have felt it necessary to do this because since that time a number of delegations have made comments on several points raised in that statement. In making my remarks today I shall also touch upon other relevant aspects of the non-proliferation treaty.
3. In this connexion let me say at the outset that we heard with great satisfaction the words of the representative of India, Mr. Trivedi, at our meeting of 23 May when he quoted an important passage from Ambassador Corrêa da Costa's speech concerning freedom in regard to the peaceful development of nuclear activities and declared his complete agreement with that thesis (ENDC/PV.298, para.22). We were also gratified to note that the representative of Mexico, Mr. Castañeda, stated at our meeting of 13 June:

"Like Brazil, India and others, we believe that the developing countries would not be able to forgo carrying out in the future, when it is technically and economically possible, gigantic civil engineering works, such as excavation for canals and ports, by means of nuclear explosions." (ENDC/PV.304, para.14)
4. Although Mr. Castañeda went on to express a point of view which differs from our own position on the carrying out of explosions by national means, it is nevertheless significant that the non-nuclear countries have become increasingly aware of the importance of peaceful nuclear activities for their economic and social development now or in the near future. Other delegations have expressed markedly divergent opinions on that particular subject. Such differences of view make it necessary for the Brazilian delegation to renew its efforts to clarify its fundamental positions.
5. The present stage of the work of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament can rightly be described as a pre-negotiation phase. Exactly three months and eleven days ago we agreed (ENDC/PV.296, para. 22), at the request of our co-Chairmen,

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on a six-week recess designed to give the super-Powers the time they needed to consult between themselves and with their allies in order to arrive at a joint draft text of a non-proliferation treaty for submission to this Committee. I do not wish to speculate here on the various factors that have prevented their tabling such a text to date; but the fact that we resumed our work some weeks ago without a specific draft treaty makes it plain that we are not yet negotiating a non-proliferation agreement. Rather we are engaged on a preliminary and very important exercise which consists in co-operating with the two super-Powers by stating our fundamental concerns with frankness and clarity so that they may be duly taken into account when the negotiating phase itself really begins.

6. Mr. Cavalletti, the former representative of Italy in this Committee, said at our meeting of 15 June:

"We ... must offer them [the co-Chairmen] our co-operation frankly and loyally. Nothing will be more helpful to them than a clear and complete understanding of the points of view of all the delegations as revealed in the current debates. Such an understanding will certainly help to make the work of the co-Chairmen more effective by giving them specific guidelines." (ENDC/PV.305, para.5)

7. We are convinced that the present debate offers a unique chance of ensuring that the interests of all nations, nuclear and non-nuclear alike, shall be reflected in the final agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. By definition, every international agreement represents a compromise of national interests towards a common goal. By stating their positions all nations represented in this Committee are preparing the ground for a compromise so that the treaty can be negotiated on a broad basis and accordingly can be universally accepted. For such is the kind of treaty to which we are looking forward: not a text agreed privately between the super-Powers and destined to passive accession by the rest of the nations, but a true agreement of the national will of its parties with provisions acceptable to all and aimed at avoiding the proliferation of nuclear weapons without prejudicing the legitimate concern of any nation for its progress and its security.

8. May I add that the Brazilian tradition in international affairs is based on the conviction that every problem must be solved by constructive negotiation rather than by resort to force or threat? The history of our contribution to the work of this Committee stands as ample proof of my words.

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9. Having said that, I should like to return to one assertion that has been voiced here several times. I am referring to the often-repeated thesis of some nuclear States that it is impossible at the present stage to determine objectively the distinction between a peaceful nuclear device and a nuclear weapon, and that for this reason an effective non-proliferation treaty must prevent the present non-nuclear countries from obtaining peaceful nuclear devices by their national means and from developing their own peaceful nuclear technology aimed at utilizing or perfecting such devices.

10. The Brazilian position in regard to this aspect has been expressed already in very clear terms. We consider it unacceptable and even not feasible in the long run to curtail freedom of scientific research in one sector of human knowledge. At our meeting of 8 June the representative of the United States advocated that the non-nuclear countries renounce "one technology, without denying themselves the benefits of that technology" (ENDC/PV.303, para.10); but here what seems to be very little to ask amounts in reality to very much. By denying themselves one particular technology the present non-nuclear nations would in fact renounce also a wide range of new scientific advancements which have definite practical application in several industrial fields and which could foster important economic activities.

11. It is no wonder that a vast number of programmes which are being conducted currently in the United States under project Plowshare are reportedly the result of joint undertakings by the Atomic Energy Commission and private enterprises. It can be seen that business is by no means unaware of the tremendous possibilities of peaceful nuclear explosions, and it is easy to imagine the significance of this fact for the less-developed countries of the world which are so badly in need of industrial development and of the creation of diversified job opportunities in basic industrial fields. By the way, international Press dispatches have recently spread the news that a nuclear explosive device has been detonated underground in the United States as part of the continuance of activities under project Plowshare.

12. Thus to forgo peaceful nuclear technology means drastically to reduce the possibilities of progress in many related fields and would be tantamount to accepting in the near future and for ever an irreversible status of inferiority and dependence for which nothing could compensate. Nations lacking such a powerful tool

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for development and progress, which represents a multiplying factor in the economy, would be placing themselves in the hardly enviable position of entirely depending on the unilateral will of the nuclear Powers. No country has a right to decide off-hand that it is to remain underdeveloped. Moreover, such a decision, if established with the legal sanction of an international commitment, would amount to the betrayal of the most legitimate aspirations of its people towards the achievement of better standards of living for everyone. If nuclear technology applied for peaceful purposes only -- with a view to the betterment of the economic and social condition of nations that would otherwise be condemned to watch the gap between them and the more advanced countries widen progressively -- is destined to change the face of the world, it is our primary duty to see that the hopes of so many millions of people are not overlooked or forgotten.

13. As for Brazil, we are deeply committed in a struggle for development, a relentless battle that is being fought on many fronts with courage and tenacity. The weapons for winning this bloodless war may be within our grasp, and we cannot envisage precluding our ability to use them. If political conditions in the world could change overnight and wishful hypotheses become realities, one could conceive that a country like Brazil might make a dramatic renunciation. Such a step, whose weighty consequences I do not believe it necessary to underline further, could only be taken if all -- and I repeat all -- nations would at the same time take a similar decision to renounce the manufacture of nuclear explosives of any kind, either for peaceful or for weapons purposes. The authority to manufacture nuclear explosives would then be concentrated in a single international organization so that no nation would retain the legal and material capability of producing them. Would the present nuclear nations consider such a prospect agreeable to them?

14. In our view, a treaty aimed at the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons -- or rather a treaty designed to prevent the non-nuclear countries from ever attaining the capability to produce such weapons -- does not necessarily have to prohibit those countries from manufacturing nuclear explosives intended for peaceful exploits. Neither is that course of action justifiable; for if technologies for one objective or the other are similar, the mere prohibition of technological development will not prevent a country from perfecting its technical knowledge and capability for warlike uses if it decides to do so.

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15. The effectiveness of the treaty does not rest, then, in the division of the world into two categories of nations, namely those which possess the most modern means to keep progressing and those which shall be denied them. Incidentally, those two categories themselves correspond to still another dichotomy: the nations which possess the power to annihilate the rest, and those which do not. No treaty conceived on that basis could ever be effective, because it would lack an essential quality: it would not be universal in the sense that it would not correspond to the interests of the parties concerned, and thus could not achieve a balanced compromise of those interests.
16. There is only one way to ensure that the treaty shall have the desired effectiveness and durability, and that is to conciliate those two orders of interests by means of what resolution 2028 (XX) (ENDC/161) and the memorandum of the eight non-aligned delegations of 1966 (ENDC/178) called "an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations". An unbalanced treaty cannot be effective, because it could never be universally accepted. It has been said here that the obligations to be undertaken by the non-nuclear nations have a value in themselves: that is, they are indispensable and valid per se, and not only as a counterpart of the obligations to be assumed by the nuclear Powers. That is quite true for any obligation in the treaty, and it is why we should not dismiss the fact that the obligations of the nuclear Powers too have a value in themselves and should not be considered only as a counterpart of the renunciation of nuclear weapons by the non-nuclear countries.
17. When we speak of balance of obligations we do not have in mind an absolute symmetry between the undertakings of the nuclear-weapon Powers and those of the non-nuclear nations. We are perfectly aware that this would not be a realistic approach to the issues involved. But we are certainly a long way from those who insist that it is preferable to have a bad treaty than to have no treaty at all. In saying that, in all candour and frankness, we do not want our words to be construed in the sense that we oppose the conclusion of a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We categorically reject any insinuation to that effect. Brazil has the firm intention of continuing to contribute the best of its efforts, in this Committee and elsewhere, to the achievement of a treaty that can be universal, effective and lasting.

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18. In this connexion we have followed with the greatest interest and optimism the recent meeting of the President of the United States and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union at Glassboro. In the same spirit we are prepared to present our ideas and to study with interest the ideas of other nations negotiating around this table, as we have always done in the past. In doing so we are only following the natural course of action of any country seriously engaged in the effort of negotiating on such an important issue.

19. In this connexion I should like to quote a statement made by Lord Chalfont at our meeting of 25 May with which my delegation finds itself in complete agreement. The former leader of the United Kingdom delegation said:

"There is in my mind no doubt that, if the non-nuclear Powers are to be asked to sign a binding non-proliferation treaty, it must contain the necessary provisions and machinery to ensure that the nuclear Powers too take their proper share of the balance of obligation." (ENDC/PV.299, para.10)

In the same statement Lord Chalfont said:

"... a non-proliferation treaty is [not] simply a matter of agreement between the United States and its allies on the one hand and the Soviet Union and its allies on the other. ... No treaty that was unacceptable to [the non-aligned countries] could possibly last." (ibid., para.7)

20. I hope no doubt will remain that our endeavour is to arrive at a treaty that is acceptable to all through its embodiment of an appropriate balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations. We conceive the balance of obligations as the essence of the treaty, something like a predominant condition that must pervade and inform the formulation of the operative provisions in the agreement. It is a ubiquitous condition, in the light of which the draft treaty will have to be discussed.

21. In the view of my delegation an effective non-proliferation treaty must contain three essential elements: first, it must constitute a legal commitment not to utilize nuclear technology for weapons purposes; second, it must provide for the objective verification of the fulfilment of that binding commitment by means of a system of international control and inspection; and third, it must assure minimal regional and global guarantees of peace that may strengthen the peaceful animus that will be the basic commitment of each contracting party.

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22. The obligations to be undertaken by both nuclear and non-nuclear nations in order to implement those three conditions must be clearly stated and accepted by all parties. If the treaty represents nothing more than a unilateral act of renunciation of nuclear weapons and nuclear technology by the non-nuclear countries, it will only mean that those countries are placing their chances of progress and their security needs entirely at the political will of the nuclear Powers.

23. The political will of a nation is not stable or steady. It varies according to many factors, such as the ever-changing pattern of international relationships, the short-term or long-term national interests of a country, the rise of unforeseeable or less foreseeable circumstances which influence the course of history. Instability is even more characteristic of alliances or blocs of nations, which are formed or dissolved when certain specified conditions arise or cease to exist. What was true in 1939, in 1945, in 1956 or in 1962 is no longer true in 1967; and what is true now might not necessarily be true a year or three years from today.

24. If this is so, how can the non-nuclear nations be content with vague assurances that their progress or security interests will be looked after by the nuclear nations in exchange for their binding commitment to renounce for ever the full utilization of nuclear energy for purposes of development or for ensuring minimal security conditions for their peoples, especially when they are or might become the object of a chronic threat by countries possessing nuclear armament and not likely to be parties to the treaty?

25. We have heard time and again the argument that the non-nuclear nations would be the main beneficiaries of the non-proliferation treaty. This would be so because, if they renounced nuclear armament, regional conflicts potentially capable of developing into a nuclear regional war would no longer be likely to take such a dangerous course. It is true that if a country does not possess nuclear weapons it is not able to engage in nuclear warfare. But it is also an indisputable fact that these countries actually do not possess such weapons; and all indications seem to point to the conclusion that none of the countries now believed to be in a position to take the nuclear option has done so. On the contrary, their interest seems to be concentrated upon the development of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy, either for their own development or for mainly commercial reasons.

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26. So in fact those who endorse the argument I mentioned a while ago seem to be concerned more with the danger of weapons that do not exist now and are not likely to exist in the near future than with the actual danger of the huge stockpiles of weapons that already exist, together with their delivery vehicles, ready to fire at the push of a button. Can it be that the mere possession of nuclear weapons makes a country more responsible than countries which do not have such weapons? Is nuclear-weapon status synonymous with international responsibility? If it were so, it would be a very good reason to go nuclear.

27. It is an illusion to imagine that in the absence of the third element I mentioned above, namely the assurance of regional and global conditions for peace, the non-nuclear nations would be able to keep their commitment not to manufacture nuclear weapons. On the other hand, if all three conditions are ensured the fact that a non-nuclear-weapon country embarks on a programme of development of nuclear explosive devices for peaceful purposes should not be regarded as a violation of the treaty because that nation will have undertaken, in a binding international instrument, not to produce nuclear weapons or to utilize its nuclear technology for weapons purposes. The control and verification machinery provided for in the treaty would be the instrument for objectively and unequivocally ascertaining that that obligation had been fulfilled.

28. Finally, the international political situation would provide no motive for nuclear activities other than peaceful ones. In fact, nothing could be more meaningful to world peace than a commitment of the nuclear Powers not to attack each other with nuclear weapons. Such a commitment would greatly enhance the prospect of a world where the present non-nuclear nations would find it inadvisable and even useless to build their own nuclear arsenals.

29. My delegation is convinced that, in order to achieve a balanced and effective non-proliferation treaty, the obligations of the nuclear-weapon Powers should be as clearly defined in the text of the treaty as those of non-nuclear countries. The obligations of the nuclear Powers should be concerned with the adoption of tangible disarmament steps, with meaningful guarantees for regional security and world peace, with the acceptance of international control on their own nuclear peaceful activities, with the continuation and intensification of bilateral and multilateral

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programmes of peaceful nuclear co-operation, and with acceptance of the principle that the treaty should not hinder the right of all States to the development of the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy by their national means, including the carrying out of nuclear explosions for civil engineering purposes.

30. The question of international peaceful nuclear co-operation is of vital significance to Brazil. My country takes great interest in increasing bilateral and multilateral co-operation with other nations in order to shorten the road to the full utilization of nuclear energy for purposes of economic and social development. We are convinced that this is the most useful way in which nuclear and non-nuclear nations can work together to make of this world a better place to live in.

31. We are open to any form of co-operation in this field, as we have always been receptive to foreign assistance for our development. We have learnt that one of the first conditions for ensuring the best application of outside assistance is not to receive such assistance passively but to exert the maximum effort to help ourselves so that the process of co-operation works more effectively through the joint endeavours of the assisting and the assisted country. Self-help is just one more reason why we think it is imperative that we should not alienate our right to conduct research and its peaceful applications with our national means.

32. The leader of the United States delegation, Mr. Foster, in the statement he made to this Committee on 8 June, mentioned the remarkable record of his country in nuclear co-operation, an effort in which he himself has played a valuable role (ENDC/PV.303, para.13). My own country has benefited in the past and is benefiting now from the experience and the accumulated knowledge of the United States in the field of atomic energy; and we count upon the continuation of such programmes with the United States and with other nations and international organizations.

33. I wish to conclude my remarks by repeating that we are here to negotiate and that we intend to do so as soon as we have a definite text upon which to negotiate. In the meantime, it is our understanding that the positions stated by us and by all other members of this Committee in frankness and good faith will be duly taken into account by those who have taken upon themselves the task of preparing the draft which will be the object of such negotiations. We say this because we firmly believe that our concern and our ideas represent legitimate aspirations of national

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interest and deserve serious consideration and study by other members of this Committee, just as their concern and ideas have always met with our respect and sympathy. It is only natural that we should expect other delegations to be guided by the same spirit of constructive negotiation so that the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons shall contain acceptable compromises which will enable it to be universal, effective and lasting.

34. The CHAIRMAN (Canada): We hope that the very important statement just made by the representative of Brazil and his plea for understanding and a frank and free discussion of the positions set forth will result in the views of other delegations, particularly those of the nuclear Powers, being expressed in regard to the many significant considerations which he has advanced.

The Conference decided to issue the following communique:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 310th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador E.L.M. Burns, representative of Canada.

"A statement was made by the representative of Brazil.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 6 July 1967, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

